

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GE

SUBJECT: RISING CRESCENDO OF EVENTS IN THE GDR TO COMMEMORATE
THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEFEAT OF FACISM

1. A SERIES OF EVENTS CALCULATED TO COMMEMORATE CHRONO-
LOGICALLY THIRTY YEARS LATER THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE FROM
THE EAST AND THE BATTLE FOR BERLIN IN 1945 HAS BEEN
TAKING PLACE IN THE GDR OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS.
ACCORDING TO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS
BEGAN IN MARCH IN THE CITIES AND VILLAGES ON THE ODER
RIVER. THESE WERE AMONG THE FIRST PLACES IN WHAT
IS NOW EAST GERMANY CAPTURED BY THE ADVANCING SOVIET
ARMY IN 1945. DURING THIS SAME PERIOD, COMMEMORATIONS
ARE BEING HELD AT THE SITE OF FORMER CONCENTRATION
CAMPS, THE LATEST BEING BUCHENWALD WHERE ONE-TIME
INMATES FROM SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES GATHERED
OVER THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 13-14. IN BERLIN, ON
APRIL 15-16, A MEETING OF OVER 150 CHURCH LEADERS
WAS HELD DURING WHICH BISHOP D. ALBRECHT SCHOENHERR,
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CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFEDERATION OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

IN THE DDR, PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE FAULT OF THE CHURCHES FOR SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHED ORDER IN GERMANY DURING THE NAZI PERIOD. BISHOP SCHOENHERR EULOGIZED "RESISTANCE FIGHTERS, COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIANS" AS HAVING LED THE WAY FOR THE CHURCHES TO DISCOVER AND CORRECT THIS ERROR. THE CULMINATION OF THESE EVENTS WILL BE IN BERLIN MAY 7-8, WITH WREATH LAYINGS AT BOTH THE SOVIET MEMORIALS IN WEST AND EAST BERLIN, A FUNCTION AT EAST BERLIN'S STAATSOPER, AND A LARGE DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION TO BE HELD AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY ON UNTER DEN LINDEN.

2. COMMENT: THE MEETING OF CHURCH LEADERS CAME ONLY A WEEK AFTER THESE LEADERS WERE WARNED BY THE GDR AUTHORITIES (ACCORDING TO WEST GERMAN SOURCES) NOT TO "TAKE ADVANTAGE" OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY TO RAISE CONTENTIOUS MATTERS PUBLICLY. THE CEREMONY AT BUCHENWALD LACKED A MILITARY PRESENCE. THIS CONCENTRATION CAMP WAS FREED BY AMERICAN TROOPS IN 1945.GROVE

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